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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000170

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S JENDAI FRAZER, AF/SPG, SE WILLIAMSON,
NSC FOR BPITTMAN AND CHUDSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2018

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SUBJECT: TFCD01: CONCERN FOR SUDAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE
CHAD SITUATION

REF: A. A) STATE 10951

[1](#)B. B) KHARTOUM 074

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) Charge Fernandez delivered talking points (reftel a) in three separate meetings with senior Sudanese Government officials on February 4 including Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Othman Ismail, MFA Under-Secretary Mutriff Siddiq (in the absence of the Minister and both Ministers of State) and National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Director General Salah Ghosh.

[1](#)2. (C) Dr. Ismail responded to talking points by noting Sudan's complaint two weeks ago about Chad's repeated (three times) bombing of Sudanese territory which killed Sudanese civilians and soldiers (reftel b). He noted that Chad had even allowed Darfur rebels to seize the Sudanese Embassy in Ndjamena and hold diplomats hostage in the past without any complaints by the United States or the international community. The bombings and violation of Sudanese territory had been met with international silence even though the UN had confirmed the facts.

[1](#)3. (C) He added that Sudan is ready to deal with Deby on one condition; that both sides agree to stop interfering in each others' territory and destabilizing each other. Ismail continued that "Sudan does not have a strategy of removing Deby and replacing him with our candidate." There is no such Sudanese proxy and indeed the rebel leaders are all Chadians, all Zaghawa and many are either relatives of Deby or former colleagues of his in the Chadian Government. "The rebels and the government soldiers are both largely Zaghawa," he remarked, "it is Deby's own people who are paying the price, on both sides and in the fighting in Darfur".

[1](#)4. (C) Ismail added that Deby may well survive this military campaign but the rebels will come back again and again if there is no stability in Chad, "there are a million Chadians today in Sudan" which means that there will always be fertile ground for disgruntled Chadians if this is not settled. He said that, personally, "Deby is, with all his many faults, one of the best rulers that Chad has had." Sudan had no wish to see Chad destabilized and did not want to be destabilized in turn.

[1](#)5. (C) Ismail closed by saying, "you can tell Washington that we have not responded to Chadian provocations in kind. We want to see an end to interference and an increase in stability in both countries. We do want to see EUFOR effectively monitor the border to prevent cross-border raids and violations from both sides."

[1](#)6. (C) NISS Director General Salah Ghosh told Charge that

"this is a fight between Chadians, not us." He pointed out that one of the rebel leaders (Mahamat Nouri) was until recently Deby's Defense Minister. He added that "we do not want to see anarchy in Chad and we think that instability there can affect Sudan, and especially Darfur, adversely." Chad's stability can come with Deby remaining in power or not, that is up to the Chadians not to Sudan. He added that Sudan welcomed EUFOR's presence in securing the border between Sudan and Chad "as long as EUFOR has nothing to do with UNAMID and with Darfur," they could be a benign and helpful presence.

17. (C) MFA Under-Secretary Siddiq, a regime insider whose authority belies his position as the fourth person in the MFA said "we are for a calm Sudan and a calm Chad." The instability coming through Chad into Sudan is claiming innocent lives. He spoke about the rebel attack last week (probably by SLA-Unity) on the peaceful village of Kalimendo in North Darfur where civilians were killed and houses burned to the ground. "This is one of many attacks, unremarked in the West, that come from Chad," he noted. He said that one of the main reasons that there had been a massive increase in attacks and thefts of international NGOs from 2006 to 2007 was because of bandits and hijackers from Chad - car theft rings - preying on Westerners in Darfur and fencing their stolen goods, including vehicles, across the border. "These thieves, bandits and killers come across, do whatever crime they can get away with, go back to Chad, and then Sudan is blamed because Darfur is somehow unsafe for foreigners and civilians".

18. (C) Comment: All three senior officials denied that Sudan's support for the Chadian rebels was any greater than it had been in the past. They sought to minimize Sudan's role in the fighting and played up the eternal internecine feuds

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of Chad's warrior clans, rightly pointing out that many rebel leaders are recent defectors from Chadian governments, past and present. Perhaps hedging their bets in case he survives, they claim to have no problem with Deby's rule per se but with the violence and instability that has become endemic and out of control in both Darfur and in Eastern Chad. Without admitting any complicity, all three came close to enunciating a basic truth about that troubled region: that many provoked the lamentable situation there and no one knows quite how it will turn out. Everyone may get burned. The fact that the fuse was lit by Sudan first and foremost - even though certainly abetted by Chad, Libya and Eritrea, at different times - is too much candor for the regime in Khartoum to admit. End comment.

Tripoli minimize considered.
FERNANDEZ